



October 2003

Important Health Benefits News for Benefits Administrators

Upcoming Events

OCT

Oct. 20 – Nov. 21 ♦ Fall Open Enrollment for Flexible Reimbursement Accounts

NOV

Nov. 11 ♦ Veteran's Day
Nov. 14 ♦ Benefits Administrator memo distributed on Medicare retiree group rate notification
Nov. 19 - 21 ♦ Tentative dates for mailing of Medicare retiree group rate notification
Nov. 21 ♦ Last day to accept FRA elections
Nov. 27 – 28 ♦ Thanksgiving

DEC

Dec. 2 ♦ Last day for keying FRA Open Enrollment elections in BES
Dec. 3 - 4 ♦ HR Symposium, John Tyler Community College

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B.A. Bulletin

More on Medical Expense FRAs and Over-the- Counter Drugs

Fringe Benefits Management Company (FBMC) has placed additional information on its Web site about reimbursement of [certain over-the-counter drugs](#) under a Medical Expense Flexible Reimbursement Account (MFRA). Highlights include:

- ♣OTC drug purchases that can be reimbursed include antacids, pain relievers, and cold and allergy medications. For the Commonwealth, these OTC drug purchases can be reimbursed beginning Jan. 1, 2004.
- ♣The medicine or drug has to be used for a special medical condition of an FRA participant and/or their dependent.
- ♣The submitted receipt must clearly state the purchase date and name of the medicine or drug.
- ♣Only expenses allowed by the employer's MFRA plan (i.e., the Commonwealth's plan) will be honored in reimbursement requests.
- ♣The reimbursement request has to be submitted in the timely and complete manner already described in benefits enrollment information.

[FBMC](#) will provide quarterly updates on the Web.

"Breaking Free from Tobacco" Surpasses Goal

As of June 2003, more than 2,300 smokers, or five times the initial goal, had enrolled in CommonHealth's "Breaking Free From Tobacco" program and an average 29% had quit smoking. Introduced in the spring of 2002, the program has helped smokers quit by providing support through a toll-free number and supplies such as nicotine patches and gum.



Qualifying Mid-Year Events Revised Online

Updated qualifying mid-year event information is now on the DHRM Web site. Categories and events may be accessed under Compensation and Benefits, [Resources for Benefits Administrators](#). See the specific link called [Making Changes](#) on the sidebar at the right of the page.

Look for these changes:

- There is a Quick List drop down box which has each category and event listed separately.
- Events are grouped according to Open Enrollment, Enrollment Options and Life Events.
- If you are in the middle of the list, a link allows you to return to the top of the page.
- Event information is shown in a more user-friendly format.

Putting the Bulletin and the Web Together

The B.A. Bulletin has become more interactive! To better integrate this newsletter with Web site information, you will note that many phrases in this issue are now Web site links. By clicking on the phrase, you can go directly to the subject on the DHRM Web site. Example: The phrase [FRA Open Enrollment](#) takes you to the appropriate Web site. We hope to expand this concept in future communications.